

Water Sustainability Act

FBC Advancing Watershed Sustainability in BC

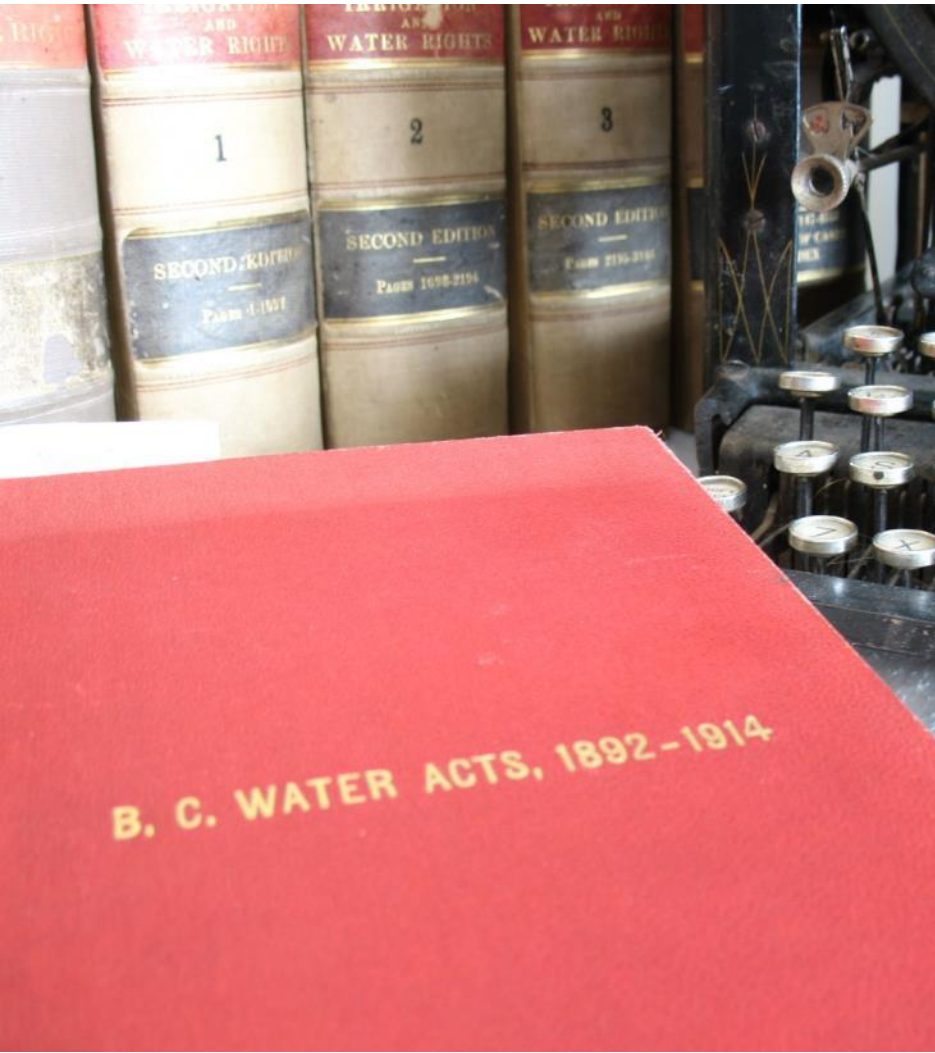
Ted White

Ministry of Environment

May 27, 2016

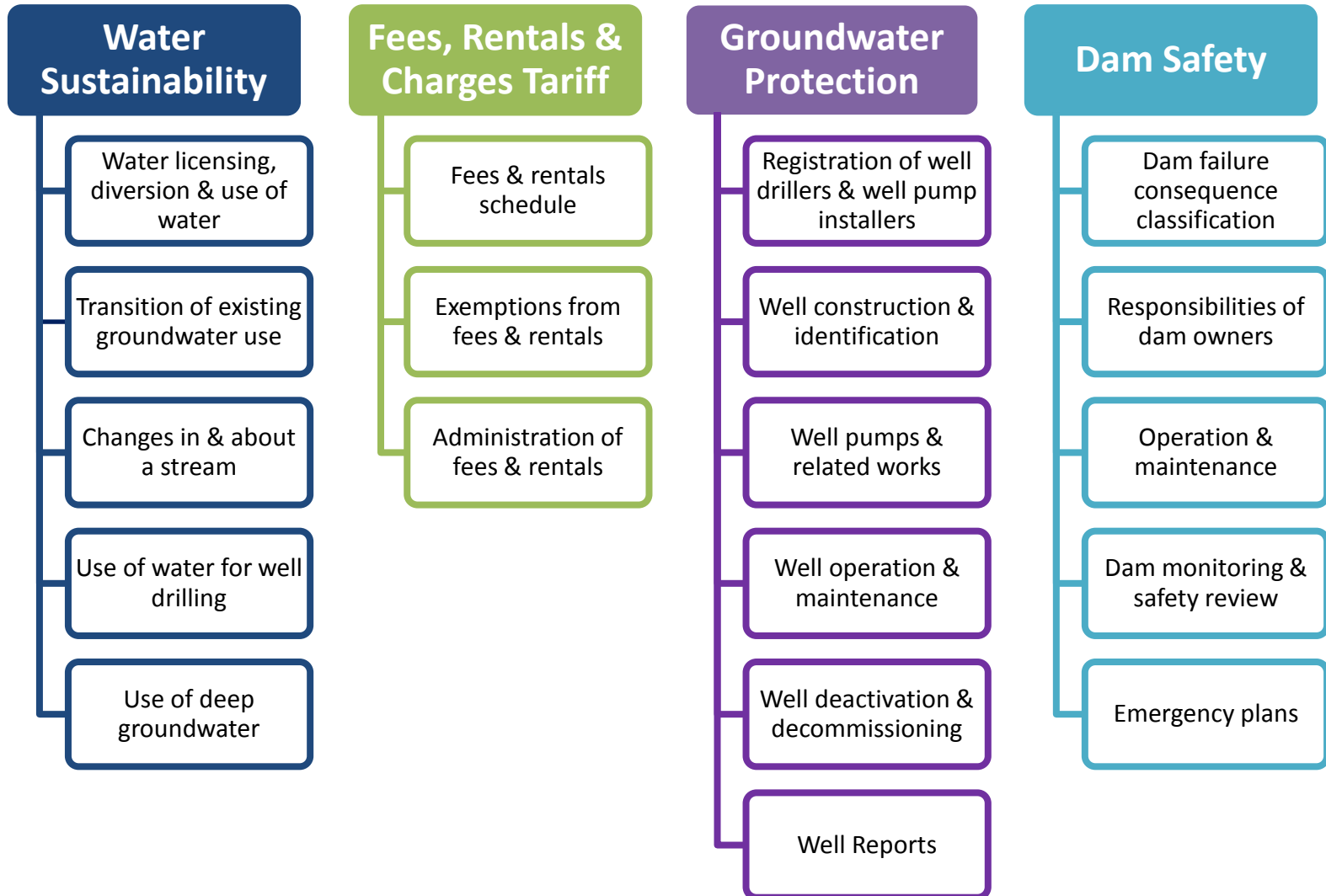


Water Sustainability Act (WSA)

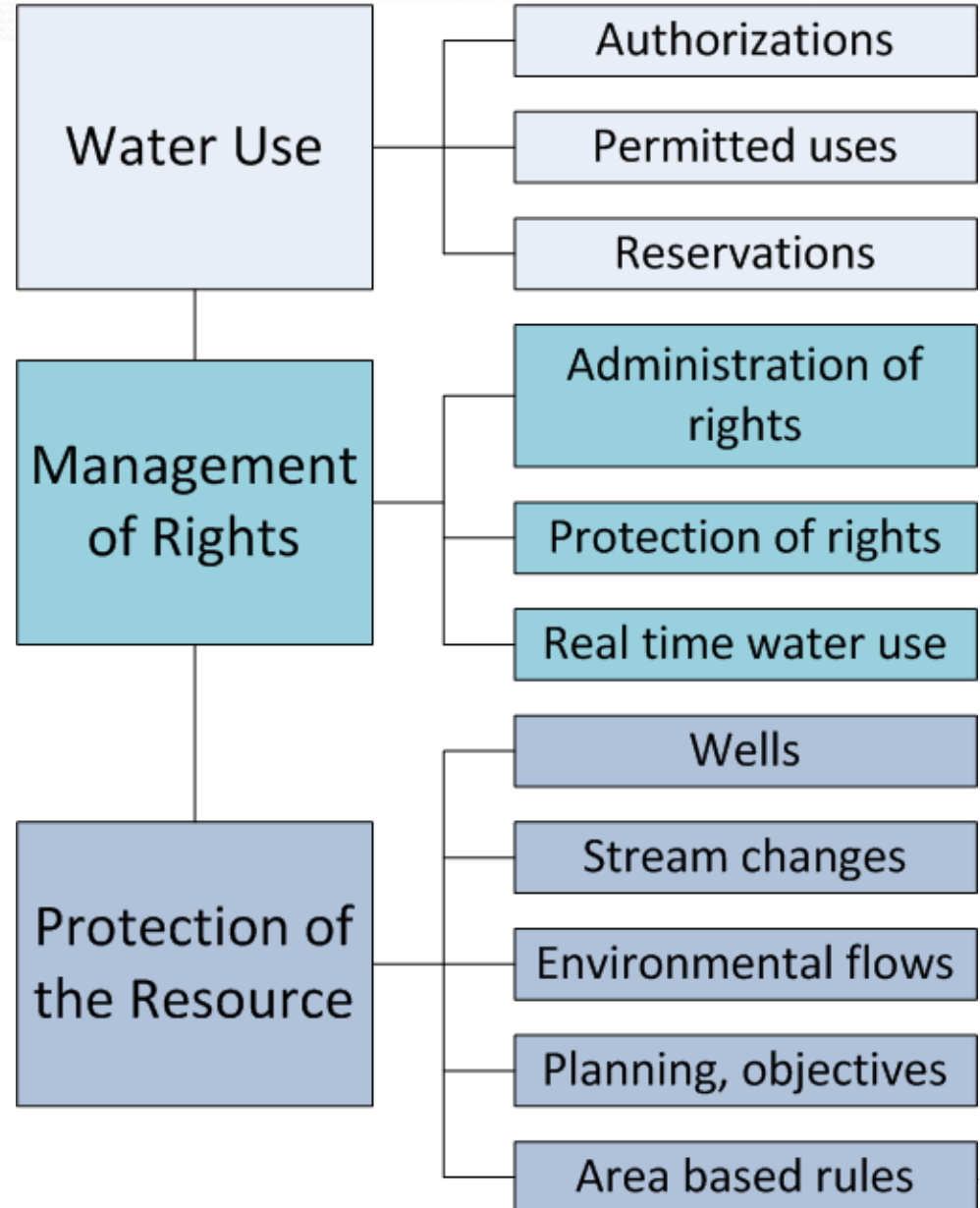


- In force February 29, 2016
- Repeals & replaces the *Water Act*
- Re-enacts water rights system & water protection powers
- New measures to:
 - protect stream health
 - regulate groundwater
 - manage water use during times of scarcity
 - expand opportunities to participate in decision-making

WSA regulations at a glance



WSA regulates in three key areas



WSA modifies FITFIR to protect human needs and ecological values



Essential household use (up to 250 L/day) is protected

During a declared water shortage critical environmental flow can be given highest priority

If water shortage threatens a fish population Minister's order can override FITFIR to target reductions



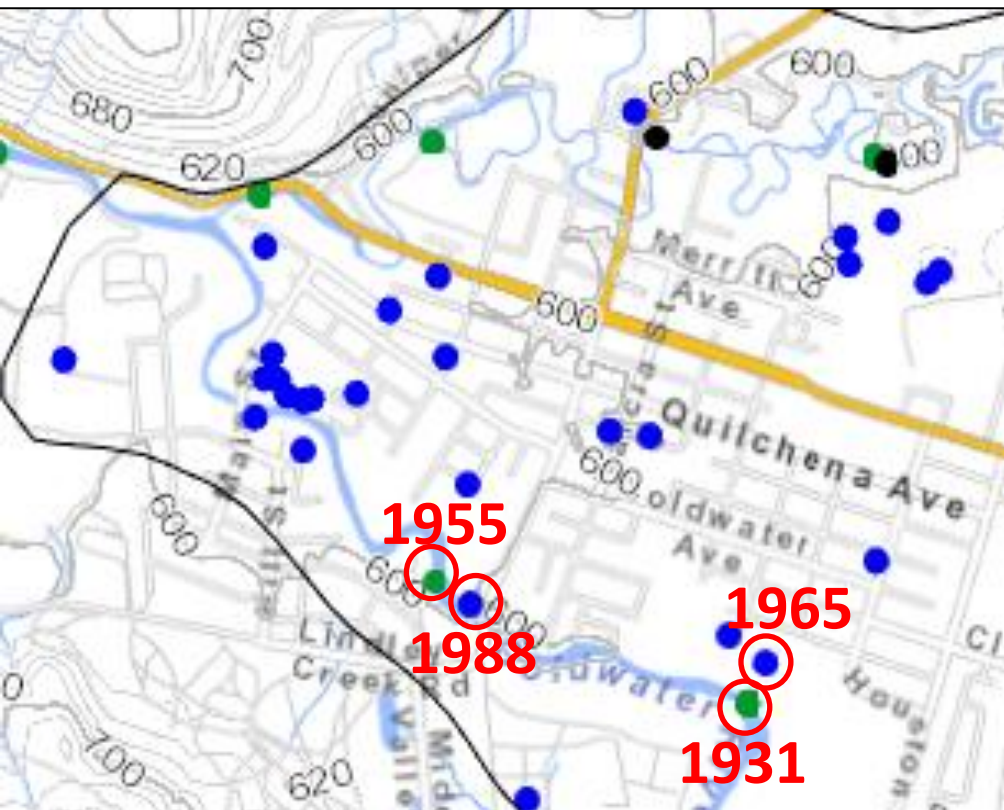
Authorizing groundwater use

- Licence or use approval required for **non-domestic** groundwater use
 - Irrigation, industrial, commercial, etc.
- Can apply before or after well drilled
- Application fees and annual rentals payable
- **Domestic** groundwater use exempt
 - Domestic includes private wells for household use, fire prevention, pets & livestock for household use, garden & lawn irrigation associated with a dwelling
- Register **domestic wells** in provincial WELLS database so use is known. **Non-domestic** users will be registered through licensing process.

Transition for “existing” groundwater use

- Use was occurring on or before February 29, 2016
- Three years to apply for a licence (until March 1, 2019)
 - No application fee until March 1, 2017
 - Continue to use groundwater until a decision is made
 - Date of precedence based on date of first use
 - Water rental fees accrue from Feb. 29/16 (no benefit in delaying application)
- If an existing user does not apply within the 3-year period, the use is unauthorized
- If EA Reviewable Project must have certificate or exemption before licence can be granted
- “New” non-domestic groundwater users, (commencing after February 29, 2016), require an authorization before using the water

May be possible to recognize date of precedence from an existing licence



- Policy being developed
- New licence or “change of works” amendment to existing licence
- Likely based on hydraulic connection to stream source

Next Steps for 2016/17

- Encourage existing users to apply
- Support with operational policy and amendments
- Develop second phase regulations and amendments to existing regulations
 - Livestock Watering
 - Measuring and Reporting
 - Mineral Exploration
 - Governance and planning policy
- Drought response

Thank you!

More information:

www.gov.bc.ca/water

Apply for a water licence at:

FrontCounterBC

www.frontcounterbc.ca

FrontCounterBC@gov.bc.ca

1-877-855-3222

